



CAN WE HELP OUR STUDENTS? EMOTION AND COOPERATION IN SUPPORTIVE TEACHING

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Abstract:

In this article, we review different aspects of supportive teaching. Teachers' roles in support, modelling, explicitation, and teachers' personal qualities will be touched upon.

Keywords: subjective well-being, happiness, intervention program, university students

1. Introduction

As teachers and students are more often seen to be cooperation partners, their roles, tasks and expectations towards each other change. Teachers' roles are more and more becoming those of a coach and mentor. Students are expected to be goal oriented, to be able to design their life-curve, and determine the skills and knowledge desired and needed for the important and relevant moments in life themselves.

The traditional teacher-learner communication model, which once may have tended to be relatively monological, has in many contexts long ago been replaced by the dialogical, cooperation model. However, oftentimes, teachers are still expected to be the driving engine, motivator, and supporter in the classroom. The challenge involves finding a good balance in the teacher's role, of being a regulator and supporter in adapting it to include the traits of leadership and mentoring that would support and increase student motivation. *Regulation* would then include *inter alia e.g.* regulating the finding of meaningful stages in the learning process, planning and being responsible for the general study content. *The supporter role* would include considering students' personal specifics (from SEN to different stages on the life curve), study process monitoring and support, encouragement of self-directed additional activities and development, as well positive enforcement in general.

In this paper we sum up some recent insights into research on motivation and student support that might be relevant in this context. The emphasis will be on teachers' potential and possibilities for increasing the supportive aspect in their work.

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1.1 Modern educational paradigms

Only recently, approaches to learning and learning methodologies were neatly divided into a clear-cut system of methodologies and approaches to be learned, analysed and followed at the teacher training education programmes and further training sessions, as well as the ensuing careers and practice.

Over the past decades, the situation has changed. I strongly support the view by Clandfield (2017), which suggests that relying on one or another methodology only may today be seen as outdated. Teachers are rather expected to be well-versed with the broad spectrum of different methodologies, approaches and philosophies that the current methodology development stages knows. What's more, they are often expected to be able to choose from the wide repertoire of different methods, methodologies and learning-teaching philosophies *ad hoc*, depending on the students, goals of the lesson, day, etc.

Clandfield (ibid.) publishes his conclusion in the global magazine for teachers of English, who are often seen to be leading the trends in the global education business – due to their number, geographical global spread, and well established academic traditions in the field. Thus, this trend is reporting of, and most likely, may also be seen to influence, the whole teaching profession in the nearest future.

The decision to choose the philosophy, approach, methodology and methods thus, as it always has, rests with each individual teacher. Of course, the choice should also respect the vision and mission, strategies and guidelines of the educational institution they are working for. This, in order to guarantee that the students can know ahead of their studies what awaits them, and to ensure that the academic family shares a common network of agreed values and principles to rely on.

In making the decision, teachers can make choices based on their own values, the student group, student needs, and the focus of the studies at that moment. In order to analyse what possible considerations can influence and support them in their choices, the aspects of motivation and teacher support prove important. Below, let us briefly review some recent research results on motivation and teacher support from current research literature.

1.2 Motivation and positive enforcement

As we know from research, motivation is difficult to explain (Reeve 2009), not always conscious (Wegner & Gilbert, 2000 in Forgas et al 2005:1-2), and also definitely related to emotions (ibid.), be it even incurred through physical influences, such as a “forced” smile or straight posture (Strack and Deutsch in Forgas 2005: 100). Also, much is shown to depend on teacher reliability, trust and positive relationships, cf. Carnell and Lodge (2002: 23): *“Learning is best promoted in a context of trust, respect and confidence. Pressure and high expectations can be damaging”*.

More than that, the relationship with the teacher can often influences the study process and outcomes – cf. Meyer and Turner (2007: 248): *“Teachers’ relationships with students have been found to be associated with students’ academic achievement and school adjustment. /.../ Emotional scaffolding can help to establish and sustain positive relationships*

and classroom climate that support student engagement, learning and perceptions of competence. /.../ ."

This closely relates to Carnell and Lodge's (2002: 23) statement that *"/.../ young people are often dependent on adults, especially teachers"*. Furthermore, Brophy (2004: 269, emphasis mine) points out that *"each person has a unique motivational system, developed in response to experiences and socialization from significant others in his or her life. In the case of students developing their motivation to acquire academic knowledge and skills, teachers are important "significant others". Therefore, rather than just accommodating classroom activities to students' existing motivational patterns, teachers can shape those patterns through socialization designed to develop students' motivation to learn"* (cf. Mullamaa 2017).

These principles are well-known, and some pedagogical approaches (e.g. the socio-emotional environment supporting approach used in Norwegian schools), seem to apply them consciously and systematically. Teachers try to be supportive and encouraging, providing students with the educational, motivational and also emotional support they need. Undoubtedly, this is the goal to strive for, and it can foster and support good teacher-student cooperation, and through this also student motivation. In addition to the example of Norway above, also Meyer and Turner (2007: 245) suggest that teachers should "scaffold" emotions in the classroom: *"/.../ scaffolding emotions in classroom"* includes *"setting a positive emotional tone, building shared understanding, extending understanding, and supporting empathy and mutual respect."* Importantly, their research illuminates a clear link between the emotional atmosphere in the classroom and the learning outcomes: *"In our analyses of classroom discourse to discover the instructional characteristics that promote high levels of student involvement in learning, we have found emotional scaffolding to be critical in sustaining students' understanding of challenging concepts, students' demonstration of their competencies and autonomy, students' involvement and persistence, and students' emotional or personal experiences /.../"* (Meyer and Turner 2007: 245, emphasis mine; cf. also Mullamaa 2009; 2017).

1.3 Cultural support and implications

Ulrika Tornberg (2015: 72, my translation) points out that it is also essential to think through the cultural implications of a classroom situation. Referring to Holliday (1994), Tornberg asks: *"Whose culture is allowed to dominate? The teacher's? The students? And in that case which students?"*. In connection with this, Tornberg (ibid., my translation) makes the point that it is not only language, but more subtle things, like *"what is important to master, attitudes which teach students how they should behave in the society in general"*, that matter.

1.4 Teachers as role models

Also the teacher's role, as that of a positive role model, should be stressed. As we have pointed out in our earlier research (cf. Mullamaa 2009, 2011, 2016), teachers are seen as guidance and role models, both as concerns learning, academic dignity, as well as the

communication models in general behaviour and equal respect sharing towards the group members.

How about the negative effects teachers might have on students? Although this often seems to be a taboo-topic, research has been carried out in this field as well. And research very clearly points to the negative effect of cold socio-emotional environments on students in the classroom, cf. Meyer and Turner 2007: 249, emphasis mine:

“Our analyses of ambiguous and negative classroom socio-emotional environments were related to student reports of more avoidance behaviour, whereas in supportive classrooms, students reported significantly lower incidences of avoidance behaviours. Consistent, positive emotional scaffolding appears to have helped establish the necessary foundation of trust needed for taking the risks and accepting the responsibility so essential to learning in classrooms”.

Thus, positive support is the best support in student achievement. This is also confirmed by the authors’ (ibid. 253, emphasis mine) reference to a study by Stipek et al 1998, which shows that *“affective climate was the best predictor of student motivation and that positive affect was associated with mastery orientation”.*

Importantly, in providing support to students, teachers should remember that also teacher emotions play a crucial role on students’ learning motivation. As stated by Schutz et al (2007: 227, emphasis mine): *“As teacher identity and emotions are inevitably related to each other, teacher identity is often conveyed and expressed through emotions, whether it is unconscious or conscious”*, that should be considered in well-balanced teaching.

It is demonstrated that teachers need to constantly monitor themselves as sources for cues of how learning and the learning situation may be perceived, at the same time following the implicit rules for discipline, emotional well-being of the group, and a positive environment in the classroom. In the same vein, Schutz et al (ibid. 231) further point out: *“/.../ within the context of classroom activity settings, teachers are expected to display emotions in particular ways depending on the nature of the events /.../. For example, in most transactions with students, teachers are expected to show pleasant emotions and suppress their unpleasant emotions /.../”.*

Ulrika Tornberg (2015: 73, my translation) points out that in all cases, the teacher’s choices of what to teach are based on what the specific teacher holds as important: *“It is always, in some way, based on one’s view on people, and one’s worldview”.* She rightfully concludes that the actual main idea of teaching would ideally be based on the negotiated plurality of opinions of the different stakeholders. If we think of the whole learning process further, then Tornberg (ibid. 74, referring to Moira von Wright 2000) suggests we should also think of how we as teachers will be thinking of the outcome of the whole learning process. She (ibid.) points to a crucial question: Will we be thinking of *what* they have become? Or shall we be rather seeing the developing personality and *who* they have become.

2. Motivation in student-teacher cooperation: teachers' possibilities

Relying on the importance of teacher support and their ability to create a supportive atmosphere for learning, as demonstrated in some of the recent research briefly summarised above, let us explore some of the possible vistas along which teachers could enhance student motivation.

2.1 Life-coach and learning strategies

It is a generally acknowledged fact that teachers have multiple and important roles in addition to that of disseminating education. As we have outlined above, these include responsibilities for motivation, support, creating a positive framework, positive scaffolding, and creating the positive atmosphere (but also dynamics, etc.) in a group. However, teachers' responsibilities, on the "macro-level", do not end with the classroom. In various situations, the teacher is awaited to have an important role in guiding the study process. Often, this may be an even broader role of advising students on how to manage with the learning process as a whole.

Furthermore, teachers can be expected to be able to advise learners on how to combine studies with the other aspects in their lives like training, independent learning and free time. In some schools, teachers may have the roles of noticing if additional support of a social worker, or a psychologist may be needed for the child.

In the case of teaching grown-ups, also the aspects of how to combine studies, work-life and family life are added. A good balance between personal life and the academic, or learning-related activities can stimulate success (cf. the role of affect above).

2.1 Teacher support in explicating the learning process and supporting student self-efficacy

2.1.1 Be explicit on language learning strategies, general processes, results from recent research on language acquisition in relation to your particular students' learning curve

As we have mentioned above, in knowing how to succeed, a positive atmosphere, teacher support and clear setting of goals are important. In addition to this, the learners should have some support in learning strategies and knowing how to pace their work. In other words, simply in knowing how learning works.

Teachers have an important role to play here as well. After all, we didn't spend all those years at teacher training education just to keep the knowledge to ourselves. As the new dynamic teacher's role often entails that they should also be good communicators, also the knowledge on learning processes could be shared.

Thus, a passive *knowledge* of the state-of-the art research results of learning mechanisms and the mastery of technologies alone cannot account for a truly rewarding and result-yielding learning process. We suggest that in today's myriad of approaches, the teacher's ability to choose a clear learning and teaching philosophy and strategy to

follow, and moreover: also *explicitly vocalise it* for students for negotiating common goals and work process procedures, may play an essential role. Such a thought-through framework will hopefully also help to lay the foundations for trust and true cooperation between the teacher and the students, which is essential for increased motivation and better learning outcomes.

Of course, a good teacher's role also entails democracy in the classroom and enabling the students to choose. Even here, a brief discussion on the different ways to learn, what the different students' personal preferences are, and some advice on how to possibly choose one's strategy – can be of considerable assistance (and indeed a motivation in itself) for students.

2.2 Teach your students how to design their personal learning process as well as the small tricks

On the “micro-level”, in providing support in finding this balance, teachers often find themselves sharing some simple “tricks” on how to manage the learning process as well. A fair share of trust and good cooperation can – in our view – be especially justified when we encourage the learners to be in charge of their own deep learning processes (cf. Mullamaa 2009). Scaffolding alone may not suffice. As we expect students to be consciously active in the “hands-on” design of their personal, individual learning process, they should also be given the tools for this. This means: students could be *explicitly explained about the learning process*, the benefits of having *a conscious plan and “blue-print” of what they are heading for*, the “small tricks” of envisioning the general goals they have as their destination, general time management, etc. Also, the importance of scheduling minor sub-goals with a realistic schedule to achieve this, may come in handy.

2.3 Tricks and memory support

In addition to the above, the more concrete skills for performing the tasks can be taught. Although this is very often done in supportive learning contexts, we would suggest that adding the knowledge of some concrete techniques (e.g. mnemotechniques etc.), some easily understood facts and overviews of results from recent research on (language) acquisition and learning etc., can enhance both student motivation and through this their actual ability to apply the techniques. This, ideally, might support them in achieving the ultimate goal faster and with a more clear vision of what they are doing and why. Also research confirms that techniques and principles of setting and envisioning one's goals, as well as simple strategies for successful learning, may essentially support student achievement and are important in backing them up in their learning process. In Boekaert's words (2007: 40): *“students who can monitor their progress to the goal and who have access to volitional strategies also know how to handle obstacles and frustration en route to the goal in a particular domain of study /.../”*.

2.5. Advice and consultations

In addition to the knowledge of the learning process, implicit and explicit, clear advice and one-to-one based individual consultations can help students in pursuing their goals. Such intensive cooperation will in its turn also give the teacher adequate information on how students are coping with their studies, their possible insecurities and lack of motivation – something which we may not be able to notice in “regular” classroom situations, especially when students have chosen to follow rather performance than mastery goals. We suggest that students who have been supported in this way not only succeed better at a given task. More than that, they might also get a boost of self-confidence and determination. This may support them in that they can set higher goals for themselves. A solid background in the form of teacher trust and support can work wonders, yielding in better results and student self-esteem not only concerning the concrete subject matter, but as individuals on the whole (cf. Student feedback on such teacher-student cooperation from our earlier research: *“I had a talk with my teacher. She believes in me/ She believes I should take the advanced course”*).

2.6 Increasing student self-efficacy

Teacher support increases self-efficacy in students. Self-efficacy supports better learning results. In tune with that, (Reeve 2009: 239) points out:

“Persons with a strong sense of efficacy attend to the demands and challenges of the task, visualize competent scenarios for forthcoming behaviours, and harbour enthusiasm, optimism, and interest. Persons with a weak sense of efficacy, however, dwell on personal deficiencies, visualize the formidable obstacles they face, and harbour pessimism, anxiety, and depression [...]. Once performance begins and things start to go awry, strong self-efficacy beliefs keep anxiety at bay”.

In other words, self-efficacy can be seen as an important sub-component of motivation. Similarly to e.g. sportsmen, where this component is raised by the coach, good teachers could raise the self-efficacy of their students through inclusive discussions about the study process, individual talks with students, log-books and so on.

2.7 Teachers’ personal qualities

The increased importance of teacher support has been noticed in different learning contexts. The modern learning contexts that facilitate the aspects of positive cooperation mentioned above, include e.g. experiential learning, problem based learning, flipped learning - fields that have been seen as important in allowing student motivation to grow, encouraging them to discover their true needs and passion. Similarly to scientific results quoted above, Beard and Wilson (2009: 48-49) point out that the main roles for the guidance provider in experiential learning include: relationship development, performance enhancement and consultation/intervention. In order to be able to provide such support in a meaningful way, a good educator *cum* supporter should encompass

various characteristics that help enforce the process. Some of these, as listed in Beard and Wilson (2009: 52-53), include:

- *"Self-knowledge and maturity;*
- *An understanding of cultural conditioning;*
- *The guts to make mistakes and learn from them;*
- *A psychological and human understanding of others; insight into human interactions;*
- *The ability to 'see through' situations; the ability to understand the meaning of events;*
- *Tolerance for ambiguity and the ability to work with it;*
- *The ability to frame a problem so that it is workable; the ability to reframe information;*
- *Avoidance of stereotypes;*
- *Holistic thinking, open mindedness, open-endedness, contextual thinking;*
- *Meta-thinking, or the ability to think about thinking and become aware without being aware;*
- *The ability to see relationships among diverse factors; the ability to spot flaws in reasoning; intuition, the ability to synthesize".*

As we notice, the qualities mentioned by these authors once again suggest that a well-functioning teacher/supporter in a modern educational context describing the general life philosophy, life skills and people skills are given the upper hand *viz a viz* pure knowledge (i.e. just teaching the subject).

2.8. Creating a meaningful learning environment

A good teacher is able to design a meaningful learning environment. As expectations towards teachers, students and modern learning continue to change, so do the expectations on the learning environment. Obviously, the so-called "monological" or "static information "feeding" system" (e.g. traditional, monological teacher-led classrooms) alone does not suffice to stimulate and engage a modern learner. In tune with the changes in the educators' and teachers' roles, as well as enhanced demands on their personality traits, and communication skills, also the demands on the learning context, environment and set-up, change. The adaptations teachers are expected to make could e.g. follow the advice by Carnell and Lodge (2002: 31). They analyse the modern learning environment. They bring out that learning then is:

- *"contextualised – the problem is related to real life;*
- *first and – the learners have hands-on experience;*
- *co-operative – the youngsters learn collaboratively to solve the problem;*
- *self-assessed – the boys review their own learning;*
- *less structured – the learners are less boundaried by time constraints" (ibid.).*

In a similar line, Brophy (2004: 256, emphasis mine) stresses that in order for students to be able to learn from the school curriculum, one should *"make sure that your school curriculum and learning activities are in fact meaningful and worthwhile, and develop this content and scaffold your students' engagement in learning activities in ways that enable them to see and appreciate their value"*.

3. Practical advice for enhancing student motivation

3.1. Coaching, Feedback and Modelling

In addition to repeating that teacher support and positive attitudes, as well as a meaningful context, are essential for students, also some additional pieces of practical advice on possibilities for enhancing student motivation may come in handy. Some of these have been outlined by Brophy (2004). He (ibid.: 258, emphasis mine) points out that *"the motivational optimal match principle [...] would occur when the domain or activity is familiar enough to be recognizable as a learning opportunity, and attractive enough to interest the learner in pursuing it"*. The motivational aspects of scaffolding "optimal aspects" for learning, thus, means considerable facilitating cooperation from the teacher. The important building blocks here, in Brophy's (ibid.: 268) view, include :

- *"Modelling – convey reasons why this is worth learning, when and why we use it, and how it looks and feels when we do (verbalize self-monitoring and appreciation of growth in one's own knowledge, artistry, craftsmanship, etc.);*
- *Coaching – provide goal reminders and cues to next steps in the process in ways that develop learners' appreciation for the learning domain and for their own development of domain-specific knowledge and skill;*
- *Feedback – provide feedback that calls learners' attention to developments in their knowledge or skill, ability to anticipate and prevent problems, or make connections smoothly; signs of artistry or craftsmanship in their work; or unique "signature" elements indicative of their personal style of operating in this domain"*.

Aspects mentioned above are indeed essential for student motivation. In this, probably, many teachers can do even more - as oftentimes we might be inclined to think that students manage the process of guiding their self-motivation on their own. However, this is not necessarily always so. Students often have a great number of subjects, activities and deadlines in their schedule. The pressure to meet the deadlines can easily guide them to following the achievement goals only (cf. above). It is here that the teacher's clear support and modelling of the learning (as well as coaching and feedback), not just for the achievement goals, but also for mastery goals, becomes essential. Here we can also stress the importance and value of deep learning, learning for life, etc.

3.2. Modelling

While coaching and feedback are usually often mentioned in methodological literature, modelling seems to be relatively less bespoken. What is meant by this can be understood when reading e.g. Brophy (2004). An important guideline in how to do this can be the principle *"model your own motivation to learn"* (ibid.: 270), which in Brophy's (ibid.) words can be done as follows:

"Model interest in learning throughout all your interactions with your students. This modelling will encourage students to value learning as a rewarding, self-actualizing activity that produces personal satisfaction and enriches their lives. Besides teaching

what is in the textbooks, share your interests in current events and items of general knowledge (especially as they relate to the subjects you teach). Call attention to current books, articles, television programmes, or movies on these subjects and to examples or applications in everyday living, in the local environment, or in current events."

It is obvious that this needs from a teacher time and capacity, also courage to step beyond the "safe" textbook-curriculum predefined area. It calls for the will and courage to venture into – what according to some is actually good teaching's true mission – shaping responsible and all-round educated sensitive and emphatic human beings and responsible and pro-active members of the society. Sometimes it is believed that this is where the teacher profession has room for development, as despite wonderful and brilliant examples of teachers who follow this principle in their professional ethos, there is still a long way to go among many others who still see their main task in more or less mechanic "forwarding of their knowledge". However, even then, the borders of how far to develop seem infinite. Brophy (ibid.: 270-271) reminds us that:

"Modelling means more than just calling your students' attention to examples or applications of concepts taught in school. It means acting as a model by sharing your thinking about such examples or applications – showing your students how educated people use information and concepts learned in school to understand and respond to experiences in their lives and to news about events occurring elsewhere. /.../ modelling may be subtle or indirect, but if it is displayed consistently it will have cumulative effects on your students' attitudes and beliefs."

In appreciating cooperation from students in showing their motivation and interest, Brophy (ibid.) further points out that their questions should be respected and answered in ways which encourages them to ask even further, and praises their innovativeness. Further tips for teachers include: *"if you treat students as if they already are eager learners, they will be"* (ibid. 272).

These approaches give the teacher an essential role as a student supporter. At the same time, there has always existed the question of nurture and nature. Also in developmental psychology, already Piaget's and Vygotskij's theories differed. As Ulrika Tornberg (2015: 76, my translation) points out, Piaget believed that the child's cognitive development takes place almost independently of teaching by grown-ups, Vygotskij has rather pointed to *"the importance of a grown up, the teacher for this cognitive development and seen the interaction between the child and grown-up as the very driving engine for development"*. Tornberg (ibid. 77) however, makes the point that there is also always interaction between the individual and their environment. She (ibid.) quotes Dewey (1938/ 1997):

"An experience is always what it is because of transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, whether the latter consists

of persons with whom he is talking about some topic or event, the subject being talked about being also part of the situation; or the toys with which he is playing; the book he is reading /.../”

Also Gibbons (2016: 28-30) dedicates a great proportion of attention to Vygotskij’s “zone of proximate development”, stressing the viewpoint that a goal-oriented, reasonably and meaningfully paced action and practice, usually leads learners to development.

While those ground-building theories in their essence sometimes still serve as the basis to one’s teaching philosophies, several different new adaptations may be relied upon by others. A good toolbox of easily applicable principles to ground your work upon, operationalised into strategies, can often become handy.

3.3. Frymier and Shulman’s 12 strategies for teachers

Frymier and Shulman (1995 In Brophy 2004: 284) *“identified 12 strategies that teachers might use to help students appreciate the relevance or value of their learning. They asked students to rate how frequently their teachers performed each of the following behaviors (ibid., italics mine):*

- *“uses examples to make the content relevant to me;*
- *provides explanations that demonstrate the importance of the content;*
- *explicitly states how the material relates to my career goals or my life in general;*
- *links content to other areas of content;*
- *asks me to apply content to my own interests;*
- *gives assignments that involve the application of the content to my career interests;*
- *helps me to understand the importance of the content;*
- *uses own experiences to introduce or demonstrate a concept;*
- *uses student experiences to demonstrate or introduce a concept;*
- *uses discussion to help me understand the relevance of the topic;*
- *uses current events to apply a topic”.*

Several studies indicated that students reported greater motivation to study for classes in which their teachers used more of these strategies (Frymier 2002)”.

Relevance can be increased by embedding the new content in the wider context, eliciting prior knowledge (ibid 285); task-related thinking and problem-solving, story-telling, etc.

Similarly to Beard and Wilson above, Brophy (2004: 296) invites us to *“induce metacognitive awareness and control of learning strategies”*. Thus, giving rise to self-regulated learning. Finally he (ibid. 299; italics mine) makes the case that

“/.../ from a motivational stand-point, the most desirable classroom activities are those that make it possible for students to accomplish the teacher’s instructional goals while at the same time accomplishing many of their personal and social goals. This provides some motivational insurance against the possibility that no relevant goal will be activated”.

It is also pointed out (ibid. 300; italics mine) that it is important to “*avoid practices that distract students from learning goals to performance goals*”. He further identifies that “two strategies for shaping students’ expectations about learning are *being enthusiastic (regularly) and being intense (selectively)*”.

4. Conclusion

In the article above we claimed that motivation and individualisation can be seen as two important guiding lights in a modern learning process. We suggested that this asks for modifications in both the traditional teachers’ and students’ roles.

In Chapters 1 and 2 we have taken a look at the general theories of motivation, and some recent highlights on this in research. Chapter 3 provided us with some practical ideas of motivation raising (e.g. modelling) accompanied with the theoretical concepts.

We have seen that today, teachers are, in general, expected to adapt a more advisory role in supporting and guiding students. The process of learning, the *why we do it*, as well as the more general goals in life become all the more important for students, and their role entails learning to take this responsibility, as well as to learn cooperating with teachers, seeing them as partners on this way. The examples from some recent research on motivation and learning we presented above, supported these standpoints. Explicitation, modelling and different inclusive strategies were mentioned as some possible solutions, along with some recommended teacher characteristics and practical hints for organising the work. To sum up, the research results presented above suggest that teachers are increasingly seen as important supporters of students in the learning process. A good teacher is often seen to be able to provide guidance and support beyond the core subject area of the academic field. Also, the emotional environment is more and more explicitly in the limelight. Teachers are expected to create a friendly and supportive working environment, to make a meaningful connection to real life and society. They are also expected to be able to provide their students with positive and emotional support when needed. The personal qualities of a modern teacher include the ability for a holistic approach to phenomena and situations, being adept at using different life skills. Also, the ability for meta-level analysis skills to be applied in strategic managing of the groups, learning processes, as well as individual and personal support, are capacities increasing in their importance for a strong modern teacher.

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